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contact with Okinawa may have taken place in 743 A.D., but this may have been confined to the island of Kume, west of Naha, and not involved Okinawa itself.[6] 175 177 648

The modern Japanese contact with Okinawa which brought about the fall of the Tenson dynasty is associated with the arrival at Unten of Tametomo in the latter part of the twelfth century. Some have regarded this as historical, others as perhaps legendary.

Unten, on the Motobu peninsula, is one of the important places in the historical geography of Okinawa island. This is the Port Melville of the Western explorers, Hall and Perry, both of whom charted the bay and its harbor.

Tametomo, of the Minemoto clan, exiled after the final defeat of the Minemoto by the Taira clan in Japan, ultimately reached Unten and there married the daughter of one of the regional nobles, and after a period of civil war, the Tenson dynasty collapsed. In 1187 A. D., the son of Minemoto Tametomo by his Okinawan wife became King Shunten. Shunten, the first of three "Japanese kings," was followed by his son Shunsa Junki (1238-1248), and his grandson Gihon (1249-1260). In 1260, the legitimate dynasty was restored under king Eiso.[7]

After his succession, Eiso toured the islands and is credited with setting regular boundaries to rice-fields. "It has been said that this greatly attracted the people so that they started to look after farming." Graves, according to a manuscript history, were first built in the island, at Urasoye, and the Buddhist temple, Gokurakuji was constructed with an officiating priest named Jenkan in charge of the temple.[8] 1764 346

The Japanese syllabary may have been introduced at this time. Buddhism apparently did not take hold. Chinese attacks on the islands in connection with the Mongol wars and the attempted invasion of Japan seem to have left no mark on the island. 218 1179

The year 1372 is the beginning of the period of relationships with the Chinese, in this case, the Ming dynasty. This is contemporary with the growth of a vast trade network involving Korea, Japan, China, the Ryukyus, and Southeast Asia. It is not clear whether the trade voyages under King Satsudo (reigned 1350-1399) to South China, Malaya, and the Philippines were instrumental in stimulating the Ming dynasty to engage in the Pacific trade, or whether the forced alliance of the Ryukyus with the Chinese 175 648 439

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6 CA Handbook, as cited, 41, and Chamberlain, as cited, 306.

7 Chamberlain, as cited, 308

8 Manuscript history in Leavenworth, The Loochoo islands, 80. On the Japanese syllabary, see Chamberlain, as cited, 308.

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1975 empire provided the incentive. The central district of Okinawa became an
6498 entrepot in the triangular China-Ryukyuan-Japan trade. In the beginning
4399 the cultural interchange was a consequence of sending Chinese ambassadors to assist in the investiture of Ryukyuan kings and the travels of Ryukyuan emissaries to Peking. Naha in Okinawa and Foochow in Fukien were ports of entry and exit for the travellers.

The Ryukyuan emissaries left Naha for Foochow on the Min river in Fukien and then began the trip north to Peking. Ryukyuans brought copper, tin, and sulphur and received brocades and silk in return. The Ryukyuan as well as ambassadors from Korea, Annam, Burma participated in this official reception at Peking.[9]

1975 The first contact with Chinese learning has been dated at 1392, when
1799 the son of the king and the son of his master of camp were allowed to attend the Imperial College. The usual route from Naha to Foochow became a cultural corridor joining China and Okinawa. This contact with Chinese learning and writing lasted until the Japanese annexation in 1879. Hall [565] in 1816 and Perry's staff in 1853 mentioned the devotion among the higher classes to Chinese learning, and though this no doubt was confined to those residing in Naha and Shuri, it was this Chinese educated class that ruled the island. With this learning too, there came the ideals of the [641] Confucian state and its five relationships, parent-child, husband-wife, [593] friend-friend, younger brother-elder brother, and subject-sovereign, which were reflected so forcefully in the family system and in the state as well. This coloring of the whole government, composed of men with Confucian ideals gradually changed, says Spencer, following Iha, "the whole mental outlook of the male population, at least around Shuri. This would, perhaps, not extend inland, and was not given to the women." In the countryside the influence of women, through the noro system, was still strong. [562] This Confucian ideal of the state, as Spencer and Iha have suggested, [1179] probably had a great deal to do with the dis-establishment of the noro system as a state religion in the seventeenth century.[10]

In the reign of Sho Shin (1477-1526), there were further foreign [1179] contacts and domestic consolidations. Buddhism was encouraged and in fact reintroduced, this time from Korea. The Okinawans requested from their Korean "suzerain" the sutras, the Buddhist canon, and religious objects in 1462, 1479, and 1483.[11] Chinese artifacts, books, and other articles were imported, and palaces on the Chinese model were constructed at Shuri. Chinese customs, dress by rank order, and the Confucian ideal of the state became part of the culture of Naha and Shuri, probably less so in the other parts of Okinawa.

[Text continues on top of P. 31--Analyst]

9 Binkenstein, Okinawa-Studien. Monumenta Nipponica 3 (1940), 201-02. Binkenstein, Zur Frage der Ryūkyū Gesandtschaften. Monumenta Nipponica 4 (1941), 264-67. For the route to Peking, see p. 266.

10 Spencer, as cited, 108-09. Quotation is on p. 108.

11 Haguenauer, Relations du royaume des RyūkyŪ avec les pays des mers du sud et la Corée. Bulletin de la maison franco-Japonaise. Série française. T 3, No. 1-2. Comptes rendues, 114.

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These foreign introductions were accompanied with the reinforcement of a native institution: the elevation of the female priesthood to what amounted to a state religion. This institutionalizing of a native religion did not mean the exclusion of foreign religions or foreign ideas. The king used the noro system to bind his realm together; at the same time, he reintroduced Buddhism, himself becoming an adherent. The priestess of the Sho household, that is the royal house, was removed "to a place without the palace, but near the main gateway" of the palace at Shuri, signifying the closeness of the chief priestess to the royal house, the extension of the system to all the islands, and the centralization, both of religious and political life. Political institutions, borrowed from China and in a Confucian mold, with the dominance of the male in the family and in the government, now existed side by side with the hierarchy of priestesses whose power rested not only on royal patronage but on an economic security whose basis was ownership in land. With the passage of time, it was the order of priestesses that gave way to the male dominated Confucian ideal. This Confucian idea of the state, a combination of the individual morality of Confucius with the ideas of statecraft of the legists developed in the Han dynasty, retained its hold until the Japanese did away with the monarchy.[12]

The new government with its capital at Shuri, a port at Naha, a royal granary at Kuno, and the town of Tomari, was rigidly departmentalized along Chinese lines.[13]

The Ryukyuan kingdom, from the middle of the fourteenth to the second half of the sixteenth century was part of a great trade network. This included the Great Loochoo, Korea, Japan, China, Siam, and with the port of Malacca as the center of the trade. The normal route was from Naha[14] along the coast of Fukien province, stopping at Foochow, up from the mouth of the Min River, along the coast of the Campa (modern Indo-China), thence to Malacca. From here, it was possible to trade with the islands of the Sunda (Java) seas, Siam, and with the province of Patani on the east coast of the Malay peninsula, south of the isthmus of Kra. From Naha, the products of Japan, Korea, and Central China were brought to Malacca; from Malacca, essences, various woods, pepper, sugar, ivory, and articles of Portugese and Arab manufacture were brought north. The various traders brought back to the Great Loochoo Chinese money, Ming porcelains, and silks of south China. There were Korean, Chinese, and Japanese colonies

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12 Spencer, as cited, 103. On the role of the legists in political Confucianism in China, see Fitzgerald, China: a cultural history, 103-04,156.

13. For interesting details, see CA Handbook Ryukyu (Loochoo) Islands, 103.

14 The age of Naha, I believe, is unknown. Under King Satsudo in the late fourteenth century, and in the period of trade of which we are speaking, Naha had a sudden expansion. There were three channels into the harbor, the northern "Yamatoguchi," used by the Japanese, a center one, "Karefuneguchi" (literally Chinese ship terminus (mouth)), and a "Miyakoguchi", the south channel which was used by the ships engaged in trade with the Sakishima group. Simon, Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Riukiu-Inseln, 36.

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Survivals of the Priestess (Noro) System

The origin of the priestess system has been traced to primitive fire or hearth worship. A woman was a priestess to the God of Fire (hi no kami) represented in the hearth stone. A set of three rather long stones sometimes set in a triangle often represented the hearth. (These stones in the place of the guardian gods of the village may have the same meaning. In the poorer kitchens, stones set in this manner for the hearth are common to this day). In every house there was a primitive hearth (kamado). "Here, before this hearth, the ancestors of the household are worshipped, the Fire coming to summarize the ancestors who have sat before the hearth in past generations."[3] Each household of a village, each village, and each township had a hearth attendant. The priestess (noro) of the whole township "represents the original worship of the predominant hearth of that region." The duties of the rural priestesses included worshipping at the ancestral shrines, deciding the lucky days for planting, and officiating at marriage and burial ceremonies.

This priestess system was made an institutionalized state religion by King Shō Shin (1477-1526). Their political power was broken by Shōjoku, a prime minister of King Shō Tei (1669-1709). The most logical explanation offered for their fall from political power is the influence of Confucianism with its standards of male dominance and the subordination of women. By the end of the 17th century, its economic and political power were declining, but its influence on individual worship, especially, in rural Okinawa, lasted down to the beginning of the recent war.[4]

The priestess system had a place in inheritance customs of the old land tenure system. "Under the ancient system," said Spencer, "certain valuable farm lands were the possession of the Noro, the remainder of the land being held by the community and reassigned at various periods."[5] Inheritance within the system insured the handing down of these properties in the female line. This succession could be accomplished in a number of ways. The female child of the brother of a priestess might succeed her. This is believed to be the method of succession in ancient times. In later times, the noro married and succession was traced in the male line. The wife of a son of the priestess,

3 This material is based on the article of R. S. Spencer, Noro or Priestesses of Loo-Choo, as cited. The quotation is on p. 97.

4 Ibid, 98, 108.

5 Ibid, 109. The material following is to be found on p. 110.